

X-MEN #121

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FIRST DRAFT VERSION

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PAGE 1

Frame 1 Establishing shot of the Xavier school gates. The sign is seen at a weird oblique angle, so that the perspective of the letters seems forced, diminishing into background. Huge oblique X near to us.

Frame 2 HUGE title credits page with the close up image of red glowing letters which read SILENCE:

TITLE/CREDITS: Silence: psychic rescue in progress 1

PAGE 2/3

Frame 1 Spread page with two tiers. The top tier has eight vertical panels. The bottom tier is one cinemascope panel. First three panels show the X-Men - Scott, Logan, Emma, Jean standing outside the door where the SILENCE sign glows. Hushed moment of silent preparation. In this first is Logan..

Frame 2 Emma now opening the door to go in, looking back briefly.

Frame 3 Jean turns to Scott.

Frame 4 Kiss on cheek. Logan glances at Jean.

Frame 6 Scott about to say something. Jean puts a finger to his lips.

Frame 7 Jean makes a hush gesture as she turns away.

Frame 8 The door closes behind her.

Frame 9 Emma and Jean stand looking at Cassandra Nova...she's in a bad way on drips and life support...we're now in the sickbay area. Light is different.

PAGE 4

Frame 1 Overhead shot. Emma takes her position in a chair behind the bed. Jean looks down.

Frame 2 Jean sits in her own chair beside the bed. She touches Cassandra's head.

Frame 3 Closer. Jean leans down and lightly closes her eyes.

Frame 4 Jean looks up and gives a thumbs up to Emma. Emma knocks back a stiff drink.

Frame 5 Emma composes herself, closes her eyes. Fingers lightly on Xavier's temples.

Frame 4 Jean goes in. Whatever expression or pose you think would work best to suggest someone boring their way into someone else's consciousness.

PAGE 5

Frame 1 Six panels arranged in concentric circles, like ripples or a target. In the outermost ripple is filled with an abstract neuronal fuzz of twisted dendrites and brain fibres, with Jean superimposed as if diving away from us, down towards the centre of the page in a clockwise spiral.

Frame 2 The second tier is filled with Xavier faces, screaming laughing, howling, crying guardians - extreme emotional defence systems to ward off telepathic invaders. Pointing, accusing, hiding their eyes, pontificating. A smaller figure of Jean spins away from us, down into the center. Splashing into the one face which is calm, Christ-like in its quiet suffering expression.

Frame 3 Then in the third tier, looking down a fisheye perspective past the pillars and stairs and beams of a strange cellar filled with iconic dreamlike objects - a huge unnerving paper and wood fish sculpture is rotting there, papers and

photographs of people from Xavier's past, all swirling in a wind which whips through the cellar, rearranging things. A bow. A crutch (all these things are associated with the letter X according to my trusty Æabecedarium). Add other Peter greenaway-esque details. This the library of Xavier's mind. The memories and symbols of his ego. A smaller Jean spirals down like water into a plughole down the weird DNA stairs and bone bookcases.

Frame 4 A screaming Xavier face fills the fourth tier. Man at the end of his tether, holding onto his own identity and sanity with a sheer act of raging will. The tiny Jean hits this face as if there's a surface there which splashes up like liquid. She's in.

Frame 5 In the bullseye at the center of the page, is Jean's face in close up, turning to look back over her shoulder at us. Seeing something awesome off panel.

PAGE 6

Frame 1 Full page pic as we get to see it too. Jean is in Cassandra's brain. Longshot from behind her as she stands on a small, miserable looking beach hemmed in on three sides by tall black brick buildings. Out in the sea, dominating the image there is a huge tower. Black and foreboding it rises up like a lighthouse of the damned. The tower has a strange superstructure - the central pillar is surrounded by a skeleton cage or helix of broken words, shattered symbols. Searchlights probe the isolated structure. At the edge of the beach are X shaped posts embedded in the sand, twisted through with barbed wire. It's like the beach at the Normandy landings. A feeling of oppression, police state tyrannical brutalism. The tarry rotted skeletons of boats in the shallows. Everything from here on in has the symbolic superreality of a dream.

PAGE 7

Frame 1 Jean head and shoulders in foreground looks off panel with a determined frown. In background on a narrow set of stone stairs which descend between tenements to the beach, we see Emma. She can't come any further than where

she is. We can see Jean's thoughts in the form of purple neon pictograms in the air near her head. They should translate as:

HE'S BEEN IMPRISONED. A MENTAL CONSTRUCTION A TRAP FOR HIS SELF...

Emma's telepathic symbols float in the air in front of her, glowing like purple neon and reading :

(We'll talk about these symbols as you get to them Vin)

Frame 2 Emma facing away from us in foreground on the steps extends her arm to indicate the faces of Cassandra in the doors lining the narrow stairwell. Each door is made of what looks like black Bible leather with huge clasp hinges. The Cassandra faces are like bas reliefs.

Frame 3 Jean looks at the sleeping face on the door.

Frame 4 It snaps at her and she flinches her hand back. Eyes surly, sleepy, partially opening for a moment.

Frame 5 Emma looks around, sensing danger. Jean is getting ready to move.

PAGE 8

Frame 1 The faces on the doors come to life. Eyes widen mouths open into O's. Emma points across the beach to the sea and Jean takes off in that direction.

Frame 2 Jean runs across the beach

Frame 3 The heads fire beams from their eyes. Emma consumed in the ferocious energy of the crossfire.

Frame 4 Mist fades. The heads grin, thinking they've destroyed Emma's thoughtform. In the swirl of smoke we may glimpse a dim figure

Frame 5 Emma stands naked and diamond, beautiful. Her clothes are burnt away, her arms are folded across her chest and a wisp of smoke hides her naked loins. All she has on now is a wide belt. She looks pleased with herself and wickedly sexy.

PAGE 9

Frame 1 Emma plunges her fingers through the forehead of one of the Cassandra heads. Its eyes roll up and it squawks in death. Emma's costume forms around her, thought-controlled in this environment.

Frame 2 Jean slows as she walks towards the shoreline, gathering her thoughts. Her hair begins to rise up around her as though caught in a fan blast from below. Little flickers of fire run through the strands. Frame 3 Jean walks forward dramatically, posing like an MTV star, lifting her arms at either side, palms upward, making things happen all around her as if by this simple gesture. Objects rise. Her telekinetic command is staggering in its scale and precision. Her flare flares up and whips around her.

Frame 4 Dream buildings coming apart.. old boats rising from the dark foam. Huge orderly, towering processions of brick and mortar pass in avenues beside her.

PAGE 10

Frame 1 Tiny Jean in longshot, dwarfed by the great bridge she's building. A gorgeous span begins to form itself out of borrowed and mind-assembled debris, an incredible Kingdom Brunel bridge extending to the tower.

Frame 2 Jean walks as the bridge creates itself around her. She's very focussed. The scale of her control is incredible

Frame 3 Overhead shot. We're looking at Jean as she walks across the bridge. Parts still fly into place. .

Frame 4 Looking down from the tower itself. Cassandra gargoyles can be seen the tower, rotating to fire upon Jean

PAGE 11

Frame 1 Emma pause. She's got a huge Cassandra face in her hands, hanging limply from

where she has it gripped between the eyes. She's ripped it off the leather facing of a door. In the stencil patch beneath, we see what looks like bleeding skin and knotted nerve cables of winking digital fibre optics and platinum circuit wire. She turns to see what's happening with Jean. The other heads shriek in fear eyes twisting to look at Emma.

Frame 2 Jean runs across the bridge and we follow her as the gargoyles attack, launching destructive bolts from their mouths. The barred door at the base of the tower has an X motif with two crossed downward thrust swords.

Frame 3 We're looking up at Jean as she leaps across the collapsing gap of exploded smoking bridge.

Frame 4 Jean falls towards the ocean, looking off panel as if for some help from Emma.

PAGE 12

Frame 1 Emma sticks out her tongue wickedly. She has no intention of coming to Jean's aid.

Frame 2 Emma gets a shock as she looks down at the grinning face she's just discarded. IT opens its mouth.

Frame 3 Jean hits the water amidst a fall of debris...

Frame 4 And the face bites Emma's foot, trapping it. The others purse their lips and spit on Emma. The flying saliva is red and filled with lots of little jumbled up letters like the rind in marmalade.

PAGE 13

Frame 1 Jean hauls herself up out of the sea, really determined and pissed off now. The bridge is collapsed and sunken into the foaming sea behind, epic in its decay.

Frame 2 She walks towards the door, blows it open. Water flies off her telekinetically like a nimbus of rain. The great EX1 seal on the door is shattered into fragments.

Frame 3 She walks into the hollow black tower. A weird room filled with symbolic stuff - bird skeleton in a cage, locked books, a rack of running shoes, gas masks, symbols of suffocation and fetuses in jars. Twin stuff hinted at everywhere. A snowglobe lifts from the towards her outstretched hand. She looks off panel, eyes riveted on the sight there,

Frame 4 Charles Xavier in grotesque pose, holding his vast swollen dripping brain, like an Atlas. Xavier struggling with the gross weight of his own imprisoned thoughts, sunk to the thighs in bubbling slime and tar like some monstrous Blakean figure. As a nod to Dali, there's an exploded wheelchair hovering in bits around Xavier. The components hang in strange splendor - Xavier's own version of the hypercubist cross. The terrible interior walls run with moisture and sport huge scrawled ghastly childlike drawings of the primal mummy and daddy. Any mad stuff you want to throw in to add to the density of visual information is fine.

PAGE 14

Frame 1 Close up. Jean holds up the snowglobe and we see that it contains a bride and groom - Xavier's mother and father. The snow inside, stirred into swirls by Jean's hand is tiny tadpole swarms of sperm.

Frame 2 Zoom in on the snowglobe as she shakes it a little, into the driving rush of sperm and bubbles.

Frame 3 Xavier looks up from his torment, the huge head weighing him down.

Frame 4 Jean has been swept into the ultimate original memory - Xavier's DNA recall. Surprised, she's diving down towards us through a 3-d explosion of swimming seed as it heads for destiny. The sperm in foreground have intricate delicate glass heads filled with coils of information. Jean looks like she's diving with some exotic species of incredible luminous deep-sea jellyfish.

Frame 5 Jean slows to a stop and floats in the impossible symbol world. Her eyes are wide with cosmic awe. Lit from below by an unearthly primordial light. Fragments of fern-like XXX shaped villi float in the solution.

Frame 5 Outrageous cosmic moment as Jean hangs poised in the solution beside us, looking down at the dreamlike scene below. the primal moment of conception as the sperm surround the egg and merge into it. It's like a weird planet sunk in wet space, surrounded by thrashing tails and burrowing heads.

PAGE 15

Frame 1 Microscopically accurate shots now as a single sperm forces its way through the coral-like structures of the zona.

Frame 2 The fusion. The X-gene activates in the pronucleus pair. A vivid signal flare, the clarion call of mutant conception.

Frame 3 Pull back to watch cell division in the egg. Something unusual is happening. as twins begin to divide.

Frame 4 Two figures hooked up to the placenta - twin unformed fetuses identical at this stage. Charles and Cassandra emerging from undifferentiated cells into the red Eden of this primary world of total nourishment.

Frame 5 Close on the unformed alien newt face of Charles Xavier. Tiny organic Xs floating in solution. The eerie light of the deepest chambers of the human experience.

PAGE 16

Frame 1 Babies growing now to near term. All lit in eerie ultraviolet plutonian shades instead of the warmth of the womb scenes we're accustomed to seeing and experiencing.

Frame 2 Close up on the face of one of them - perfect light, pre-dawn divine light on the barely-formed face. The unborn child seems lit from within, godlike.

Frame 3 The two of them float silently, calm, together. We circle around them in this timeless still place.

Frame 4 Then the supreme shocking moment as One of the infants' eyes tear open and stare at us.

Frame 5 The infant's POV, reaching out its translucent hand and looks down at it with awe and understanding.

Frame 6 The baby makes a fist. A terrible smile crosses its face. It's worse because there should be no such expression on an unborn face. Its eyes shift to look at its twin dreaming in a prenatal trance.

PAGE 17

Frame 1 And suddenly it's War in the Womb as the first infant hits its twin's face with a nasty backhanded blow. The twin yelps in first pain.

Frame 2 Thrashing internal tides, the tiny hands choke and battle. The First Twin's face is gruesomely evil. The Second's eyes are closed, in distress as the other attacks its face, blocking its nose and mouth.

Frame 3 The First Infant is killing the Second now, strangling it with its own umbilicus, pulling at its face. Seething toxic horror in the coloring now amniotic fluid like urine and bile in the dark green light. The Second's eyes tear open, seeing the unseen universe for the first time.

Frame 4 The primal crime: Second Infant unleashes intense psychic power to destroy the First, the attacker. Second's mouth streams with energetic light and more pours from his eyes. First Infant screams. Infernal scouring light fills the miniature womb world.

PAGE 18

Frame 1 Outside it all. Mum in strobe-motion sequence across the panel, clutches her stomach, sways and then falls. Her belly glows in the first spasm and light shoots from her mouth and nose. Dad Xavier reaches to grab her.

Frame 2 Jean looking at the snowglobe as flowers of blood bloom inside it, snaking around the bride and groom. It floats up from her hand.

Frame 3 The snowglobe floats back into place as Jean walks towards Charles.

Frame 4 We're behind him as he hangs in his chains. Jean crouches down in front of him and the chains begin to come apart.

Frame 5 She takes his huge head in her hands, he looks up, eyes rolling tears. Monstrous, godlike in grotesque immensity Xavier seems like some suffering figure from a Renaissance fever dream.

PAGE 19

Frame 1 A page of tall vertical frames, showing the anti-lighthouse prison of Charles Xavier. The bridge fallen.

Frame 2 A star appears in the center of the tower.

Frame 3 The tower crumbles. Sun bursts down out of the clouds.

Frame 4 Tower falls. The star is Jean.

PAGE 20

Frame 1 Emma is trapped under the sticky word goo of the heads. They aim their crackling eyes at her.

Frame 2 Emma struggles. Choking and pulling at the incoherent sticky gel filled with little letters. It's tacky like pizza cheese, covering her face, cutting off her breath.

Frame 3 Then it all splats into tiny gelatin globules and letters all around her. The door-faces go rigid with shock as though electrified.

Frame 4 Jean is there in the aftermath. All the faces are limp and dead now, like stroke victims. Smoke drifts from their slack mouths. Letters and jelly globules spin in the air, arranging themselves into HELLO EMMA THANKS FOR THE HELP

Frame 5 Emma gets up, dusting herself down look, shooting a venomous glance at Jean. Jean is talking no shit. She point back towards the beach she's come from. A shape there maybe ?

PAGE 21

Frame 1 Longshot. Emma kicks at the fallen head angrily and one eye flies out to splat on the wall. Jean is grimly amused as she walks towards us.

Frame 2 Emma shoots us a placatory glance over her shoulder. I'm all right really...

Frame 3 Emma follows Jean as Jean issues a symbol command like this:

Frame 4 The crouched foetal autistic Professor on the beach with his huge swollen head.

Frame 5 Overhead, Jean crouches down, putting her arm around the monstrous Xavier self. They seem small and isolated on the beach. Emma stands by, looking down at the strange numinous scene.

PAGE 22/23

Frame 1 Five horizontal insert panels in a double page end scene. First pic has the X-Men. Logan is reading ??? Scott is listening to his walkman, waiting. They sit apart and do not talk.

Frame 2 Logan looks up suddenly alert.

Frame 3 The red SILENCE warning light goes out.

Frame 4 Scott and Logan exchange glances as the door opens.

Frame 6 Big pic taking up all of the final page. Emma and Jean emerge. Jean looks grave. Emma is just behind and shoots the confident in control Jean a sly, sullen glance. Emma doesn't like being beaten. And if she can't beat Jean with her super-powers then she might have to get ugly...
JEAN: PROFESSOR X TRIED TO KILL HIS TWIN SISTER WHILE THEY WERE BOTH STILL IN THE WOMB.
JEAN: WE OUGHT TO TALK...

continued